



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Site Update

San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site

Harris County, Texas

December 21, 2015

This fact sheet will tell you about:

- **Current Status**
- **Site Background**
- **Site Contaminants**
- **About Dioxin**
- **Water Quality**
- **Residential Soil Sampling**
- **Capped Areas**
- **Community Engagement**
- **For more information**

Current Status

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in cooperation with state, county, and local agencies is continuing to assess current and future site conditions to develop a comprehensive plan for site cleanup.

As part of EPA's oversight responsibility, and to verify the condition of the cap, the EPA completed an underwater inspection of the armored cap on December 10th, 2015. The inspection found an area on the northwest part of the cap where the armor cap has been displaced or eroded. This underwater area does not have a geotextile liner under the rock, and a gap in the armor cap has resulted. The exact size of this gap is unknown, but is at least 17-feet wide and extends to about 10-feet deep. Delineation and repair of the gap area will be performed as soon as possible following EPA approval of a repair plan in consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Sediment sampling will also be performed in the gap area. EPA approval of the repair plan is expected during the week of December 21, 2015. The repair work will be performed by the Potentially Parties [International Paper and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corporation] under EPA oversight.

Previous inspections of the cap, which included bathymetric surveys, did not identify any problems with the armor cap. The last inspection and bathymetric survey was completed in October 2015. The effectiveness of

the inspection procedures will be evaluated and modified as necessary.

Due to the complexity of the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site (the Site), the EPA decided that additional information was needed prior to recommending a cleanup alternative. The USACE is performing an independent review of remedial alternatives, site modelling, and potential river/weather conditions that might influence remedy selection (among other things). The USACE issued a draft report in August 2015. The EPA has accepted comments on the USACE draft report and has directed the USACE to address these issues in a final report.

The EPA is also directing and overseeing additional evaluations of sediment, cap pore water, groundwater, and surface water. These activities are anticipated to be initiated in December/January and completed by July 2016. On-site activities will include sampler installation, directional drilling of groundwater monitoring wells, and collection of subsurface sediment and surface water samples.

After these investigations and the Feasibility Study are completed, the EPA will announce a proposed remedial alternative in a Proposed Plan that will be available for public comment. The EPA will also host a public meeting during the comment period to allow public participation in the remedy selection process.

The EPA anticipates that the Proposed Plan will be released for public comment in late 2016. The EPA will continue to communicate with site stakeholders and the community on progress at the Site.

Site Background

The Site is on the western bank of the San Jacinto River, in Harris County, Texas, located north and south of the Interstate Highway 10 (I-10) bridge over the San Jacinto River. The Site was placed on the National Priorities List (NPL) in March 2008.

Site Contaminants

Soil, sediment, and fish tissue sampled during site

Deleted: following delineation of the gap area and revisions made as appropriate

investigations indicate that dioxins are the chemicals that need to be addressed. Other chemicals including arsenic and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are also present, but do not contribute to a significant amount of risk compared to the dioxins.

A temporary armored cap installed over the waste pits in 2011 isolated the dioxin in the pits. The cap prevents dioxin releases to the river as well as direct exposure to persons in the area. Fish and shellfish in the river, however, still contain dioxin (as well as pesticides and PCBs) from various sources, and are covered by a fish

Water Quality

A total of 13 monitoring wells were installed and groundwater samples collected from across the Site from 2011 to 2013. The results of the groundwater sampling indicate that dioxins have not migrated to the deeper Chicot aquifer, which is a drinking water source. Because dioxins are virtually insoluble, they do not move readily in the groundwater system. Groundwater is neither a transport pathway nor an exposure pathway at the Site.

Sampling in the cap pore water and surface water just above the cap in 2012 did not detect any tetra-dioxin. As noted above, additional sediment, groundwater, cap pore water, and surface water sampling will be conducted under the direction and oversight of the EPA.

Residential Soil Sampling

In 2011 and 2012, soil samples were collected from yards near the river banks in two residential areas: an area to the west of the Site (between Meadowbrook and River Road); and a second area along the eastern shoreline of the San Jacinto River to the northeast of the impoundments.

The results of the residential soil sampling program show that dioxins in the soil of residential areas near the Site are no different than background concentrations (for example soil in public parks of Houston) and are below levels considered protective by the EPA for residential soils. As noted above, dioxins originate from a variety of sources.

Capped Areas

consumption advisory issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

About Dioxin

Dioxins are produced from a variety of natural and man-made processes. The dioxin found in the Site impoundments originated from the Champion International Paper Mill. Dioxins adhere to the materials in the impoundments and are virtually insoluble in water.

The armored cap includes three layers of protective geotextile and geomembrane in some areas covered by rock, and was designed and constructed in accordance with the EPA and USACE design guidance to withstand major storms, including those that would only occur once every 100 years.

The cap continues to be routinely monitored and maintained. In July 2012, a relatively minor storm (much less than the 100-year design storm) event occurred and resulted in a loss of armor rock in some areas, but did not expose the underlying waste material. The cap was repaired following the storm, and was later upgraded in January 2014 to address deficiencies identified by the USACE by reducing the slope and increasing armor material size in some localized areas.

Community Engagement

[The San Jacinto Community Awareness Committee \(CAC\), comprised of the EPA, State, and Harris County agencies, also coordinates efforts to review and respond to site community engagement and Site related issues. State Agencies have also worked closely with the community to provide information and canvass neighborhoods.](#)

In 2012, the EPA awarded a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) to the Galveston Bay Foundation. Galveston Bay serves as a lead agency to interpret site information and data for the community with the assistance of a Technical Advisor.

Deleted: ¶

¶

Deleted: ¶

Deleted: ¶

The San Jacinto Community Awareness Committee (CAC), comprised of the EPA, State, and Harris County agencies, also coordinates efforts to review and respond to site community engagement and public issues impacted by the Site. State Agencies have also worked closely with the community to provide information and canvass neighborhoods.

For more information:

If you would like more information about the Site, visit our website or contact the following resources:

<http://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0606611>

[NOTE: Site documents will be unavailable from December 16 - 21 due to a system upgrade.]

U.S. EPA:**Gary Miller**

Superfund Remedial Project Manager

214.665.8318 or 1.800.533.3508 (toll-free)

Donn R. Walters

U.S. EPA, Community Involvement,

214.665.6483 or 1.800.533.3508 (toll-free)

Superfund Regional Counsel

214.665.2157 or 1.800.533.3508 (toll-free)

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality:**Superfund Section**

512.239.6368

Crystal Taylor

Community Relations, Superfund Section

512.239.3844

Texas Department of State Health Services:**Tina Walker**

Tina.walker@dshs.state.tx.us

512.776.2932 or 1.800.588.1248 x2932

Site Repository:**Stratford Branch Library**

509 Stratford Street

Highlands, Texas 77562

All inquiries from the news media should be directed to the Region 6 Press Office at 214.665.2200.

To receive a Spanish translation of this fact sheet call the EPA at 1.800.533.3508 (toll-free).

Para recibir una traducción en español de esta hoja de datos, comuníquese con la Agencia de Protección del Medio Ambiente de los EEUU (la EPA) al número de teléfono 1.800.533.3508 (llamada gratis).

Deleted: Sr.

Deleted: Public Liaison

